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### REMARKS

After entry of the present Response, Claims 1-20 are pending, with Claims 1, 3-4, 6-10, 18-20 withdrawn, and 11-17 are under examination. By the present Response, Claims 1 and 11 are amended and new Claim 21 is added.

#### Rejection of Claims 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 11-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,270,358 to Asmus (herein "Asmus"). The Examiner maintained the rejection of the claims over Asmus and stated that "claim 11 does not specify the source of moisture at the dermal structure or whether there is a direct correlation between the diffusion gradient and moisture at the dermal structure". Further, the Examiner stated, "there is no indication in the claim language that the dermal structure will be subject to increased moisture as a result of the diffusion gradient". Applicants traverse the rejection.

Asmus discloses a two phase composite composition of particles of gel of a swollen hydrocolloid dispersed in a pressure sensitive adhesive matrix. "[T]he composite adheres to the surface of the skin of the patient and maintains that surface in as dry an environment as can occur where the skin or skin opening exudes perspiration, or other body fluids." (Emphasis added, see Col. 4, lines 48-51). Asmus repeatedly teaches that the composite has a "high moisture vapor transmission rate" and that the "high moisture vapor transmission rate property provided by the gel facilitates removal of the moisture or other fluid from the area where the composite is adhered." (Col. 3, lines 45-48; see also as examples of this teaching, Abstract; Col. 2, lines 36-37; and Col. 4, line 19).

Applicants currently claimed invention provides moisture to the dermal structure to which it is provided and hydrates the dermal structure. In Asmus, there is no teaching of providing moisture to the application site, and in fact, there is clear teaching against providing moisture to the site by the multiple and repeated requirements for removal of moisture to maintain adhesion to the site.

Further, Applicants' currently claimed invention is not a combination of a pressure sensitive adhesive incorporating a thickened gel hydrocolloid. Thus, Asmus

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does not teach each and every element of the currently amended claims, and thus does not suffice as an anticipatory reference. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

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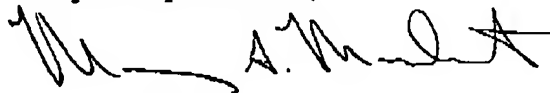
### CONCLUSION

The foregoing is a complete response to the Final Office Action dated February 23, 2007. Applicants respectfully submit that at least Claims 11-17 and 21 are patentable. Applicants request rejoinder of the withdrawn claims with the allowed subject matter when agreement is reached. Early and favorable consideration is solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 20-1507.

If the Examiner believes there are other issues that can be resolved by a telephone interview, or that there are any informalities that remain in the application which may be corrected by the Examiner's amendment, a telephone call to the undersigned agent at (404) 885-3652 is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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